

**17th ANNUAL REPORT**  
of the  
**NATAL PARKS, GAME AND FISH**  
**PRESERVATION BOARD**  
for the period  
**1st APRIL, 1964 to 31st MARCH, 1965**

To the Honourable T. J. A. Gerdener, Administrator of Natal.

Sir,

The Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board has the honour to submit its report for the period 1st April, 1964 to 31st March, 1965.

**A. GENERAL**

The Honourable Justice Mr. F. N. Broome resigned from the Board during the year. Apart from this one change, the following eight members continued to hold office until 30th November, 1965:

Mr. A. M. Wood, M.E.C. (Chairman).  
Mr. D. E. Mitchell, M.P. (Deputy Chairman).  
Mr. E. James.  
Mr. J. U. Friend.  
Dr. H. B. Anthony.  
Senator Dr. J. L. Pretorius.  
Mr. A. O. Simpson.  
Major H. Urquhart.

On the 21st November, 1964, Mr. E. J. V. Grantham passed away. This was a sad loss to conservation in Natal, as Mr. Grantham had served the Board faithfully and well as chairman for an uninterrupted period of 12 years.

Eight meetings were held during the year, the venue on each occasion being Head Office in Queen Elizabeth Park Nature Reserve.

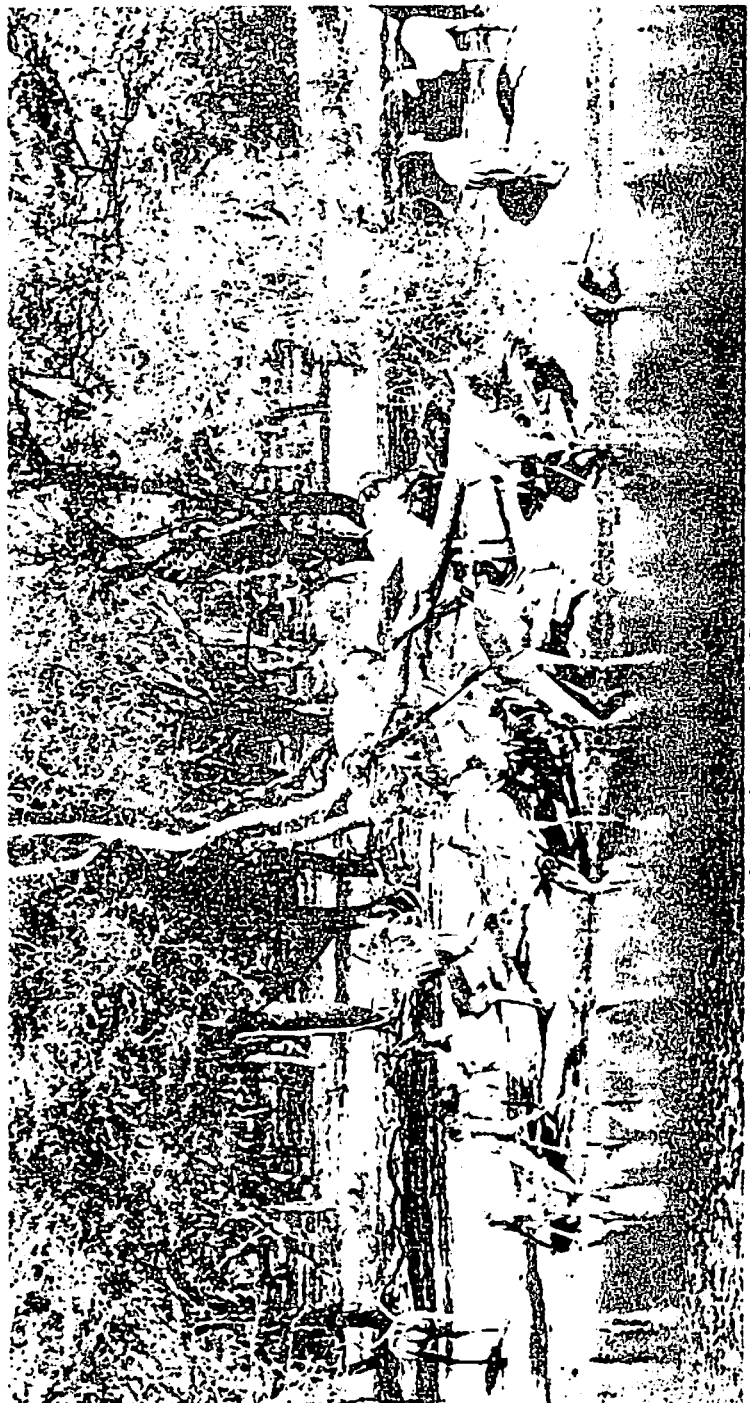
**Committees:**

The Zululand Reserves Committee met on two occasions.

**B. HEAD OFFICE**

**Financial:**

A statement of the Revenue and Expenditure for the period 1st April, 1964 to 31st March, 1965, is annexed and is self-explanatory.



Impala at Bube Pan, Mkizi Game Reserve

### Miscellaneous :

(a) The Board-sponsored book "The Freshwater Fishes of Natal", was published during the year. The author is Senior Research Officer R. S. Crass, M.Sc.

(b) Senior Ranger T. P. Dutton produced a booklet on St. Lucia Lake.

(c) The advance booking period for accommodation reservations within Hutted Camps was extended from three to six months.

(d) For the first time, European female employees were issued with uniforms.

(e) The Second Pan-African Ornithological Congress was held during September in the theatre at Headquarters Building in Queen Elizabeth Park Nature Reserve.

(f) The Historical Reserves Advisory Committee was established, the first Chairman being Mr. A. O. Simpson.

(g) 3,899 persons viewed wild life conservation films at the annual Royal Agricultural Show. These were projected by members of the Public Relations staff.

(h) The facilities within the Board's reserves were again used by filming companies.

(i) Volume III No. 2 of "The Lammergeyer" was published.

## C. ZULULAND RESERVES

### HLUHLUWE GAME RESERVE

#### Prevailing Conditions :

The spring rains were very late and it was not until the 26th October that any rain of consequence had fallen. Rainfall throughout the summer was poor and by the end of March, 1965, Zululand was in the grip of the worst drought in forty years. Areas that were burnt in the spring of 1964 were unable to recover due to lack of rain and heavy grazing.

#### Game Notes :

During the year an effort was made to trap and identify the various species of rodents in the reserve. A number of new species were identified. The predominant species, however, seems to be *Rattus natalensis*.

A giraffe calf was born. There are now 13 giraffe in the reserve. Three buffalo bulls had to be destroyed. A total of 18 buffalo were recorded as having died from natural causes and five were killed by poachers.

Five black rhino died from natural causes, including one that slipped into a deep pool and drowned, despite efforts to save it. Two white rhino died from natural causes.

Twelve warthog were caught and presented to the Mlilwane Private Game Reserve in Swaziland.

Two black rhino were immobilised and removed to Ndumu Game Reserve. Six cheetah, obtained in the Eastern Transvaal, were brought to Hluhluwe Game Reserve. As the animals were still young, they were retained in captivity for later release in the southern section of the game reserve. Cheetahs became extinct in Zululand in the late 1930's.

A complete count of wildebeest populations at Hluhluwe, in the Corridor and the Umfolozi Game Reserve was attempted in February. Due to extremely dry and hot weather, however, the majority of wildebeest remained in dense bush. The total count of 7,824 is consequently considered to be an under-estimate, probably by a wide margin.

#### Tourism :

Tourist figures rose by 2,317 people, compared with the previous year, to 22,755 people who came in 6,452 vehicles.

#### Poaching :

During the winter there was a sharp increase in the number of poaching incidents. A game guard was murdered by poachers during September 1964, and another was seriously injured in a cane knife attack. Arrests were made in regard to these attacks and one of the accused was sentenced to death.

During the year 67 adults and 29 juveniles were arrested on poaching charges. Sentences totalled R2,766 with an alternate 4,160 days imprisonment. Eighty-three cuts were meted out to juveniles. In addition to the above a poacher with numerous previous convictions was arrested after shooting a buffalo. He was declared a habitual criminal and sentenced to four-and-a-half years hard labour. A rifle of .303 calibre was confiscated. Weapons confiscated from poachers included three .303 rifles; one .22 rifle; three shot guns; 50 assegais; 43 cane knives as well as 33 knobsticks and 96 snares. Many hunting dogs were destroyed during the year. There was an alarming increase in snare laying in the reserve and several hundred snares were found and removed in and around the perimeter of the reserve.

#### General :

Two local farmers requested Parks Board officers to inspect their farms during the year with a view to turning large sections of their land to game farming. Several other local farmers have shown keen interest in the proposed projects.

Lectures on court procedure were arranged for game guards by the Officer Commanding the South African Police stationed at Hluhluwe. These lectures were well received and proved most beneficial.

An internal radio communication system was established during the year.



Zebra

### UMFOLOZI GAME RESERVE

Apart from a good rain early in the year it was very dry for the rest of the period. The winter was dry and unusually cold. Both the Black and White Umfolozi rivers came down in flood late in October. On this occasion the Black Umfolozi swept over the bridge and totally destroyed the northern approaches. Total rainfall for the year was 27½ inches.

#### Operation Rhino :

One hundred and eleven square-lipped rhino were immobilized during the year. The majority of these were caught in Bantu Trust Land south of the reserve and 89 were distributed as follows :

Translocated to other parts of the Republic	75
Exported to Swaziland	2
Exported overseas	12

Altogether 96 rhino were translocated to the Kruger National Park during 1963 and 1964. This figure represents their total herd. Those that went overseas went to Alberta, Canada (one pair); six to Hannover, Germany, and a pair each to the United States of America and Burma. Two calves were born to rhino cows transferred from Umfolozi. One was born in the Ndumu Game Reserve and the other in the Loskop Nature Reserve in the Transvaal. This was the first square-lipped rhino calf to be born in the Transvaal since 1896.

Black rhino were also successfully immobilised and translocated. Other game species caught included blue wildebeest, zebra, waterbuck, impala, reedbuck and nyala.

#### Game Notes :

There was some movement of white rhino from their haunts in the western area to the south. This can probably be ascribed to the vacuum left by capture in this area. Black rhino are increasing in the Umfolozi Game Reserve and it is estimated that there are 55 in the reserve.

Of the nineteen eland re-introduced, sixteen survived quarantine and were released in the spring. Two of this number subsequently died in the veld and the remainder have gradually adapted themselves to their new environment and are reverting to the wild.

The Umfolozi lion was seen on several occasions by members of the staff. When four cheetahs were caged at the rhino pens the lion visited them and in the resulting panic one cheetah broke a leg. The cheetahs were later transferred to the Hluhluwe Game Reserve.

Populations of wildebeest, zebra and waterbuck have increased considerably.

#### Wilderness Trails :

These trails are as popular as ever and plans were made and approved for the introduction of five day trails, but had not been put into effect by the end of the year. A total of 358 people, of whom 60 came from countries outside the Republic, participated in 67 trails.

#### Fencing :

The southern fence had reached a point two miles east of the Maduma-Munyana confluence by February, 1965. Further improvements were made to the original design and the resulting four cable fence is proving to be most effective. Supplies of free cable were received from mines and elevator companies from all over the Republic.

#### Patrols and Poaching :

There was a marked increase in the number of poachers captured in comparison with previous years, the total number amounting to 235 for all areas compared with last year's figure of 147. In the Mbuzana area alone 122 poachers were apprehended. Of the dogs found within the reserve 214 were shot; two firearms and 101 assegais were taken from poachers. The increase in poaching can, to a great extent, be attributed to the drought.

#### Tourists :

A new record was reached with 5,800 people visiting the reserve compared with the previous year's figure of 4,008. Accommodation was taken up by 3,130 people compared with 2,450 in 1963/64

## NDUMU GAME RESERVE

### Prevailing Conditions :

Although this reserve did not escape the drought and pasture was poor in some areas, fresh water supplies were good throughout the year. The total rainfall was 15.75 inches.

### Management of the Reserve :

During the flood season, November to January, a portion of the eastern boundary fence was under water. Hippo could go over this submerged section, so the height of the fence was increased by three strands to make it an eight strand fence.

At Inyamiti Pan the water level was low in the dry season, but the blocking of the channel to the Pongolo helped to maintain a reasonable level. A new game viewing hide had been built on Dhlozi point together with two further hides for game viewing at the pan.

Patrols were carried out constantly in the western area resulting in many Bantu squatters being moved out after they had been caught laying snares. A number of squatters moved out of the area on their own. In this section three strands of wire were also added to the five strand fence. Roads have been repaired and cleared of bush.

Many snares were found along the southern boundary fence. Most of them were set some 20 paces outside the fence. Experiments were carried out with Kornitol (an animal repellent). This proved to be of great value in keeping animals away from the fence line. Use of the repellent had to be limited owing to its price.

The area around the river confluence and Banzi Pan was very popular with visitors to the reserve who enjoyed walks in the Sycamore fig forest which teems with baboons, samango and vervet monkeys as well as many species of birds. This area is troubled by Bantu from across the Mocambique border who lay snares for hippopotamus in particular. A considerable number of hippo snares were found and confiscated during the year.

### Game Notes :

In the eastern section there was a marked increase in the suni and bushbuck populations. At the Inyamiti Pan considerable increase in the hippo population was noticed. Birds of many species and numerous crocodiles could be seen for most of the year. Impala and nyala also frequented the area in large numbers. In the western area, where nyala, reedbuck, bushbuck, grey and Natal duiker are increasing markedly, a lone warthog boar as well as a lone kudu bull appeared. As far as is known, the warthog and kudu are the only representatives of their species in the whole area. There were three black rhino in the western area. The white rhino are doing well and four calves were born. One calf was killed by a large crocodile.

The elephants in the Sihangwane area are seldom seen and no trouble was experienced from these pachyderms.

### Law Enforcement :

After a lull in poaching it flared up again during the latter part of the period under review. Many snares were found in the reserve and 37 culprits were brought to trial. A total of R260 in fines and 515 days imprisonment were meted out to those found guilty.

### Visitors :

In spite of very bad access roads to the reserve, there was an increase of 293 visitors over the 1963/64 figure of 636, making a total of 929 visitors for the year.



*Waterbuck*

## MKUZI GAME RESERVE

Rainfall recorded for the year was 18.48 inches, which is the lowest for the past ten years. The second lowest was 21.52 inches recorded in 1958/59. The only good rains, almost half of the total rainfall, fell in the two months of October and December (9.08 inches). For the rest of the year drought

prevailed. Both Nsumu and Ndlondlela pans dried up. By the end of March, Ngazeni and Bube pans were the only major surface waters left in the reserve. In the north eastern section the Udisa and Masheza dams with a few small pans still contained a little water. With the exception of a very cold week in June, winter was mild. January was the first really hot month and in February the temperature rose to a maximum of 108°F.

#### General Management :

Ten miles of entrance road to the reserve were re-formed and hardened, loop roads were graded and shaped. A new caravan road was built over the hill near the dipping tank on the entrance road to the reserve.

The first horse for use on patrols was introduced into this reserve in December, 1963. A year later there were eleven horses, of which ten belonged to the Board and one was privately owned. The training of game guards to ride and work with horses has been a slow process, but the value of horse patrols has been proved especially in the western section of the reserve. Foot patrols, however, still remain the main means of patrolling, especially in the heavily bushed areas where snares and traps are often set by poachers.

#### Veld Management :

A system was introduced whereby Bantu women from the surrounding reserves were employed for five days a week and remunerated with surplus game meat. Apart from other tasks, bush eradication was one of the major projects worked on. During the months April/May some scrub control was carried out in the Malaleni areas. This area can best be described as parkland. Scrub such as *Euclea divinorum*, *Gymnosporia* sp. and some *Acacia* species were cleared in order to maintain the parkland effect. Cut bushes were left on the spot.

A large area north of Msinga road and between the airstrip and Msinga bush was effectively cleared of scrub.

Bantu women were also used for anti-soil erosion work in the badly over-grazed Nyagaza area near Madlabeni. Gullies, formed along paths used by impala and wildebeest were blocked with rocks and other suitable material including branches of thorn trees.

After good rains in December grass grew well under the thorn cover, although lack of further rain inhibited really satisfactory growth.

Seven fires occurred during the year. With the exception of one, all fires were in the west, along the Lebombo foothills, and three destroyed fairly large areas of veld. Large areas were badly overgrazed but tall grass did cover a much larger area of the reserve than two years before. Although most of these grasses are of the less palatable species, not even these reached the seeding stage prior to 1963.

#### Game Notes :

Impala control was carried on throughout the period under review. Due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Swaziland, restrictions imposed by the Department of Veterinary Services severely curtailed the capture and delivery of impala to farmers. Only 797 impala were removed during the year. Of these 12 went to the San Antonio Zoo in Texas, U.S.A. These animals were first penned and tamed in the reserve before dispatch. Wildebeest control was stepped up, but was very much less than for impala.

#### Re-introduction of Mammals :

Four square-lipped rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*), a female and three males, were introduced from the Umfolozi game reserve. The males arrived in January, by which time conditions were already very dry. A lot of trouble was experienced with two of these animals as they continuously wandered out of the reserve onto neighbouring farms where they had to be recaptured. One animal was recaptured twice within 23 days. It was subsequently sent back to Umfolozi. The total white rhino population now is six, of which only two are females. The first giraffe ever to be re-introduced into Mkuzi, arrived on Wednesday, 6th January, 1965, from the Eastern Transvaal. One more arrived on the 12th, bringing the total to two bulls and five heifers. Fate played its role in the introduction of these animals into Mkuzi. All of them were originally destined for Umfolozi Game Reserve and it was only due to the unexpected high rate of mortality during transportation, that it was decided to off-load them at the nearest game reserve, which was Mkuzi. After being quarantined for a month the animals were released on the 13th February. They have adapted themselves very well and are doing well in the reserve.

A lone bull elephant was seen inside the boundaries of the reserve on 18th December. It was noticed by two Europeans and several non-European members of the ranging staff. The animal remained in the reserve for only twenty-four hours, during which time it kept to the thick bush near the Nsumu guard camp.

#### Visitors :

The reserve was visited by 5,226 people in 1,572 vehicles ; this reflects an increase of 72.5 per cent in the number of tourists to visit this reserve over the 1963/64 figures. Bube Hide has remained the main attraction throughout the year.